



Gladys Merle Hadnot Hooker

July 25, 1936 - August 14, 2025

On the morning of August 14th, 2025, Gladys Merle Hadnot Hooker passed away peacefully in her sleep and joined her husband, Jim Hooker who predeceased her in 2011. She is survived by her daughter, Kim Hooker Ballesteros, son-in-law Sean Michael Ballesteros, precious grandson Lyle Austin Ballesteros, and dearest friend Shirley Rose.

Gladys was born on July 25th, 1936, in the small town of Leesville, Louisiana, to Gladys and Luke Hadnot. Known as 'Pud' to her family, she spent her happy childhood living out in the country, surrounded by aunts, cousins, and her beloved brother Luke Hadnot, who predeceased her in 2018. The family moved to Baton Rouge right before Gladys started high school. There she enjoyed playing the piano at church and recitals. She graduated from Louisiana State University with a degree in International Business and moved to the big city of Houston, Texas after getting a job at Humble Oil. It was there that she met James Lee Hooker, an accountant from Albany, Texas. They had quite the tumultuous courtship before eloping one crisp fall weekend in 1960. After saying their vows at a church in Lubbock, they celebrated their marriage at the Texas Tech football game. Eight years later, Kim Lee arrived, completing their family of three.

Jim's work with Exxon moved them across the world to Jakarta, Indonesia, and then back to the coal mining town of Carlinville, Illinois. Gladys took it all

in stride. She embraced traveling to several countries while living overseas and then braved the long, cold midwestern winters. In 1982, they made their way back home to Texas, living in Spring for the next thirty years. Gladys and Jim's favorite outings were to Marco's for fajitas and margaritas and to Strack's for barbeque. She walked every day, planted flowers in the backyard, and spent many hours reading on their deck under the tall pines. In later years, she would fill up the kiddie pool for Lyle, and they would have fun with the sprinkler and lots of laundry bottle caps. She was an awesome Tapu (Lyle's name for her since the age of 2). After Jim died, she moved to Montrose to be closer to Kim, Sean and Lyle. She bought a beautiful townhouse on Hawthorne, the first street she lived on when she moved to Houston in 1958 - a full circle moment.

Gladys had style. She knew how to dress, her hair always looked great, and accessorizing was her gift. Furnished with treasures she found while living in Southeast Asia, her homes always reflected her personal style and grace. She loved a project and spent many hours painting, wallpapering, sewing window dressings and decorating. Her gift wrapping skills were unmatched, her chili recipe was fire, and her sharp wit caught folks off guard at times. Gladys treasured her piano and played it often, usually with a puppy dog at her feet. Her favorite television show was Law and Order, and she enjoyed a cold beer and peanuts on her balcony every afternoon as she watched the world go by. Her puppy dogs brought her great joy and companionship over the years, and she was always up for a little sale shopping with Kim. Most of all, Gladys was completely devoted to her family - and they all love and miss her tremendously.

A graveside service will be held at the Houston National Cemetery on Friday, August 22nd, at 10am. The family requests no flowers, but a donation to Houston Public Media in her honor would be lovely. Gladys listened to their classical music station every day.

Cemetery Details

Houston National Cemetery

10401 Veterans Memorial Drive
Houston, TX 77038